

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 00781 291043Z

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR AO US CG

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE GOZ ACCOMMODATION WITH MPLA

REF: A. STATE 19277 (NOTAL) B. KINSHASA 177 C. KINSHASA 394

D. KINSHASA 472 E. KINSHASA 647

1. ASU SUGGESTED IN OUR PREVIOUS REPORTING, WE BELIEVE THERE MAY BE SOME BASIS FOR OTTOWAY'S THESIS IN JAN 26 OF WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE, I. E., THAT ZAIRE IS POSITIONING ITSELF FOR

SOME FORM OF ACCOMMODATION WITH MPLA.

2. THIS POSSIBILITY WAS MENTIONED IN REF B, AND SUBSEQUENT NAMEING OF ZAIRE'S POSITION WAS DETAILED IN REFS C AND D. MOBUTU IS ABOVE ALL A SHREWD PRAGMATIST, AND IT WOULD BE SURPRISING IF HE WERE NOT A LEAST GIVING SOME THOUGH ALONG THESE LINES. WE DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT HE WOULD MOVE AS PRECIPITOUSLY IN THIS DIRECTION AS OTTOWAY SUGGESTS. MOBUTU IS MORE LIKELY TO CONTINUE COVERING HIS BETS WHILE WAITING TO SEE WHETHER THERE IS ANY CHANCE OF THE FNLA AND UNITA STAYING ALIVE MILITARILY. THE MOST RECENT REPORT OF SOUTH AFRICAN WITHDRAWAL AND THE JAN 27 HOUSE VOTE COULD WELL INDUCE MOBUTU TO EXPLORE MORE ACTIVELY POSSIBILITIES FOR ACCOMMODATION. BUT HE WILL PROBABLY WANT A CLEARER READING OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH HE CAN RELY ON US SUPPORT
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PAGE 02 KINSHA 00781 291043Z

FOR ZAIRE'S OWN SECURITY BEFORE DECIDING ON ANY DEFINITIME

COURSE OF ACTION VIS-A-VIS THE MPLA AND ITS VOEIT BAKCERS.

3. THERE IS ALSO SOME EVIDENCE THAT MOBUTU'S RELATIONS WITH FNLA'S HOLDEN ROBERTO ARE NOT AS CLOSE NOW AS THEY USED TO BE. FOR SOME TIME MOBUTU VIEWED SAVIMBI AS BEST QUALIFIED TO PLAY THE LEADING POLITICAL ROLE IN ANGOLA. MOBUTU HAS MEANWHILE LOOKED TO HOLDEN ROBERTO TO PROVIDE THE MAJOR MILITARY DETERRENT TO THE MPLA. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT IN RECENT MONTHS MOBUTU HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY DISILLUSIONED WITH HOLDEN'S MILITARY PERFORMANCE ON THE NORTHERN FRONT. HOLDEN, FOR HIS PART, HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY CRITICAL OF FAZ'S PERFORMANCE IN THE FIELD AND OF ZAIRE'S ALLEGED UNWILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE HIM WITH ADEQUATE SUPPORT. SAVIMBI HAS ALSO COMPLAINED ALONG THESE LINES, AND IN RECENT WEEKS MOBUTU'S CONSULTATIONS WITH BOTH ANGOLAN LEADERS HAVE BECOME LESS FREQUENT. WE DO NOT RPT NOT HAVE EVIDENCE THAT ZAIRE HAS STOPPED SUPPORTING FNLA AND UNITA ALTOGETHER; ON THE CONTRARY, RECENT INTELLIGENCE REPORTS INDICATE THAT MOBUTU, ALTHOUGH DISCOURAGED PARTICULARLY BY HOLDEN'S PERFORMANCE HAS, NEVERTHELESS PROMISED TO GO ON HELPING MOVEMENTS AS BEST HE CAN. THE FACT IS THAT MOBUTU'S VERY LIMITED RESOURCES AND GROWING CONCERN ABOUT THE THREAT TO ZAIRE'S SECURITY MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO GIVE ANYTHING MORE THAN MINIMAL ASSISTANCE, REGARDLESS OF HIS POLITICAL INTENTIONS.

4. OTTOWAY HAS TOLD US THAT HIS CONCLUSION THAT MOBUTU MAY BE READY TO DROP THE FNLA STEMMED PRIMARILY FROM A PRIVATE INTERVIEW HE HAD WITH BISENGIMANA, MOBUTU'S CHIEF ADVISOR. THIS IS NOT SURPRISING FOR BISENGIMANA HAS IN HIS TALKS WITH US MADE NO EFFORT TO HIDE HIS VERY LOW ESTEEM FOR HOLDEN. THE EXTENT TO WHICH MOBUTU MAY NOW SHARE BISENGIMANA'S NEGATIVE VIEWS IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR. IN MAY LAST TWO TALKS WITH MOBUTU HE HAS MADE VIRTUALLY NO REFERENCE TO EITHER HOLDEN OR SAVIMBI, FOCUSING INSTEAD ON THE SOVIET/ CUBAN THREAT TO ZAIRE. ANOTHER SOURCE FOR OTTOWAY'S ANALYSIS MAY HAVE BEEN SENATOR TUNNEY'S AIDE, BILL COUGHLIN, WHO DURING A MEETING JAN 22 WITH HOLDEN ASKED WHETHER FNLA WAS GETTING ENOUGH HELP FROM THE GOZ. HOLDEN DID NOT REPLY

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PAGE 03 KINSHA 00781 291043Z

DIRECTLY, BUT DID NOTE THAT MOBUTU HAD TOLD HIM THE DAY BEFORE THAT ANGOLANS WOULD HAVE TO RELY MORE ON THEIR OWN RESOURCES IN VIEW OF ZAIRE'S OWN ECONOMIC AND SECURITY PROBLEMS.

5. MOBUTU'S INTERVIEW WITH THE BELGIAN PUBLICATION LE PEUPLE WAS SUMMARIZED IN REF E. (FULL TEXT OF INTERVIEW WOULD ADD NOTHING PERTINENT.) WE FIND INTERESTING

MOBUTU'S HINT THAT ZAIRE'S "SENTIMENTALISM" IN SUPPORTING
FNLA MIGHT HAVE TO END. HOWEVER, WE TEND TO VIEW THIS
MORE AS ANOTHER INDICATION OF KEEPING OPTIONS OPEN RATHER
THAN A CLEAR SIGNAL THAT THE FNLA IS ABOUT TO BE ABANDONED.

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